THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The rural availability of telephones is 1.84% as on 31.10.2006 (latest available).

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. As per NTP-1999 (New Telecom Policy-1999), target fixed to increase rural availability to 3% by March 2007 and 4% by 2010. Details of Planning/actions being taken to achieve the target are as under:—

(i) BSNL (Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited) has restored laying of underground cable upto 5 Kms of telephone exchange against the earlier standard of 2.5 Kms for providing telephone on landline.

(ii) BSNL is deploying WLL (Wireless in Local Loop) network in rural areas to meet the demand of telephone connections beyond 5 Kms of exchange i.e. scattered and far-flung rural areas and where telephone connection is not possible on landlines.

(iii) BSNL is deploying its mobile network to cover gaps in existing coverage and additional requirements based on customer base besides covering villages with population 5000 and above and thereafter going to villages with population 1000 and above with subsequent expansion.

(iv) BSNL has also received the work for provisioning of VPTs (Village Public Telephones) in a 66822 undisputed, accessible and inhabited villages having population more than 100 including 14183 villages in remote and far flung areas to be provided on DSPTs (Digital Satellite Phones Terminal).

Recommendations of the NKC

887. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA.
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Knowledge Commission has submitted a set of 10 recommendations to the Prime Minister relating to setting up of portals on water, energy, environment knowledge network, higher education, intellectual property rights, traditional knowledge and health issues;

(b) if so, the details of the recommendations made by the Commission; and

(c) if so, by what time Government are likely to consider its implementation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Rural and urban tele-density

888. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in India there is merely 2 per cent rural tele-density as compared to 31 per cent in urban areas;

(b) whether Government are aware that rural development is the most urgent need of the hour;

(c) if so, the action plan of Government to speed up rural tele-density in the country; and

(d) the status of rural tele-density in Orissa and the action plan of Government to sanction enhanced funds to improve this tele-density?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir. The rural tele-density is 1.84% and that of urban is 49.53% as on 31.10.2006 (latest available).

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The following steps are being taken to improve the rural tele-density.

BSNL (Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited) has set a target to provide 10 lakh telephone lines in rural areas during 2006-07. In order to increase tele-density in rural areas, BSNL has taken following initiatives:—

(i) BSNL has restored laying of under ground cable up to 5.0 Kms. of telephone exchange against the earlier standard 2.50 Kms. for providing telephone connection on landline.